

THE
BABES IN THE WOOD,
IN VERSE.

AN AFFECTING TALE.

A NEW EDITION,

Corrected and Enlarged by a Friend
to Youth.



If you have a penny or two now to spend,
Look in at Day's Book-store, my kind little friend.

NEW-YORK.

MAHLON DAY, 374 PEARL-STREET.

1836.

P R E F A C E.

The very affecting story of the *Babes in the Wood*, has long been a favorite with young people : and many a tear, no doubt, has been dropt in the perusal of it. It is not known, at this late period, whether the relation is strictly true or not, but there is reason to suppose, it is founded on fact. The love of money, called by the apostle, “ the root of all evil,” we can conceive, might have had so strong an influence on the Uncle’s mind, as to have induced him to commit the horrible act he did ; but the dreadful punishment which followed his wicked deeds, may serve as a warning to our young readers, closely to watch their own failings, and to endeavor to avoid sin of every kind. Who would dare to commit a wrong act, if he could foresee the punishment which follows, with unerring certainty !

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.



Come ponder well, you parents dear,
The words that I shall write,
A doleful story you shall hear,
Which time hath brought to light.

A gentleman of good account,
In Norfolk liv'd of late,
Whose riches did indeed amount
Unto a fair estate.

He lay with sickness like to die,
No help could save his life ;

And at that time, as sick as he,
Lay his afflicted wife.

This pair had liv'd where peace abode ;
Were to each other kind ;
In love they liv'd—in love they died,
And left two babes behind.

The one a fine and pretty boy,
Not passing five years old,
The next a girl more young than he,
And made in beauty's mould.

The father left his little son,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a year.

And to his little daughter Jane,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage day,
Which might not be control'd.

But if the children chanc'd to die,
Ere they to age should come,
Their Uncle should possess their wealth,
For so the will did run.

'Now brother,' said the dying man,
'Look to my children dear,
'Be good unto my boy and girl,
'No friend else have I here.



' To God and thee, I recommend,
 ' My children, night and day,
 ' But little time we surely have
 ' In this low world to stay.

 ' You must be father—mother too,
 ' And uncle, all in one ;
 ' God knows what will become of them,
 ' When with the world I'm done.'

With that exclaim'd their mother dear,
 ' O brother, kind and free !
 ' Thou art the man to bring our babes
 ' To joy or misery.



' If thou shouldst keep them carefully,
 ' Then God will grant reward ;
 ' If otherwise, thou then shalt feel,
 ' The anger of the Lord.

She kissed her children then in love,
 ' That from her bowels glow'd :
 ' God bless you both, my children dear ;
 ' The tears then freely flow'd.

When they had done the brother spoke
 To this sick couple there :
 ' About your children, young and dear,
 ' O do not fear or care.

' God never prosper me or mine ;
 ' Let all my riches fade,



If I should wrong your children dear,
 'When in the grave you're laid.'

The parents died—possess'd one tomb,
 The children home he takes;
 He palliates their grief and pain,
 So much of them he makes.

But soon another scene we see—
 The love of money wound:
 He strays from truth—humanity,
 To villainy profound.

He had not kept these pretty babes,
 A twelvemonth and a day,
 Till for their wealth he found a plan
 To take their lives away.



He bargain'd with two ruffians rude,
 By wickedness beguil'd,
 To take these tender children young,
 And slay them in the wild.

He told his wife and all around,
 He did the children send,
 To be in London fairly train'd,
 With one who was a friend.

Thus went away these pretty babes,
 They seem'd in harmless pride,
 Rejoicing with a merry mind,
 At such a horse-back ride.

They smile and prattle on the road,
 While pleasure bears the sway,



Chat with the wretches who agreed
To take their lives away.

So that their pretty speeches made
Their murderers relent ;
For tho' they undertook the deed,
They sorely did repent ;

Yet one of them more hard of heart,
Vow'd to perform his charge,
Because the wretch who hir'd him,
Had pay'd him very large.

The other still opposed the thing,
So here they fell in strife ;
With one another then they fought,
About the children's life.



And he that was of mildest mood,
 The other monster slew ;
 The children in the lonely wood,
 Quak'd at the awful view.

He took the children by the hand,
 While tears stood in their eye,
 Told them to go along with him,
 And not to mourn or cry.

Two miles by him they thus were led,
 For food they did complain :
 ' Stay here (said he) I'll bring you bread,
 When I return again.

These pretty babes with hand in hand,
 Went wandering up and down,



But never more could see the man
Returning from the town.

With blackberries their pretty lips,
Were all besmear'd and dyed ;
And when they saw the gloomy night,
Sat down and mourn'd and cri'd.

How after this it far'd with them,
We scarce can tell our youth,
For want of good authority,
To state the same as truth.

'Tis said, the wild they travell'd o'er,
At length for want of food,
They pin'd away in anguish sore,
And perish'd in the wood.



And now the heavy hand of God,
 Upon their uncle fell ;
 Most fearful fiends did haunt his house,
 His conscience felt a hell.

And in a voyage two sons of his,
 Both perish'd in the sea :
 By loss on loss he was reduc'd,
 To doleful misery.

The thunders roar'd, the lightnings flash'd,
 One night of gloom most dire ;
 It struck his buildings that were round,
 And set them all on fire.

His barns were burnt, his goods consum'd,
 His lands were barren made—
 His cattle died that stock'd the field,
 And nothing with him staid.

He lost or mortgag'd all his land,
 Ere seven years came about ;
 At length the direful wicked act,
 By Providence came out.

The man who vilely had agreed,
 To kill these children dear,
 For robb'ry was condemn'd to die :
 When to his exit near,

He made confession of the truth,
 As is above express'd :
 And for his wickedness in youth,
 Was horribly distress'd.

Their uncle while with judgments met,
 —While bitter anguish sway'd ;
 In prison lay confin'd for debt,
 And there his exit made.

All you that be executors,
 Or hold the guardian's place,
 O'er children who are fatherless,
 The Infant's helpless race,

O, take example by this scene—
 Do justly with delight ;
 Lest God in judgment on you fall,
 And your vile deeds requite.

CONCLUSION.

As we have now related clear,
What we have understood,
The story of the infants dear—
THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

It here remains for us to state
Some serious things to youth;
For them to read and contemplate—
To lead their hearts to truth.

Dear children! you displeasur'd
At the extreme offence;
The uncle's harden'd heart of steel—
His cruelty intense.

It is of great concern to you,
To keep a guard secure,
Against the passions mean that grew,
And did his heart allure.

Blind avarice, ambition wild,
Two stains with horror view'd;
They should indeed be shunn'd as crimes
Of greatest magnitude.

They, when admitted to arise,
Pollute the human heart—
The character of man debase—
Destroy the reasoning part.

Whene'er you by these powers are drawn,
Deceitful pleasures hear
Of pomp, and greatness of the world,
You to destruction steer;

O! then it is that you indeed,
In seeking to be great,
Pursue the path the wicked tread,
And conscience violate.

Her dictates you will not regard,
 But treasure up a store
 Of misery that's hard to bear,
 And wretchedness that's sore.

Those who by nursing passions vile,
 Offend their Maker kind,
 Advances make—resist the Light—
 Become more hard and blind :

Proceed to acts of cruelty,
 Revenge and murder too,
 Run on, and calmly perpetrate—
 Most horrid deeds pursue.

Those who depart from rectitude,
 The Judgment Day will feel :
 'Twill heavy fall on those indeed,
 Who lie, and swear, and steal.

On those committing blackest crimes,
 Most shamefully absurd,
 And e'en for those of paler hue—
 For ev'ry idle word.

'Those who would shun the sinner's way,
 Avoid each evil deed,
 Must shun companions who are vile,
 That to such vices lead.

Remember this, whate'er you say,
 And all you think or do,
 Though in the dark conceal'd away,
 Are open to His view.

He knows the secret of each heart,
 O, let this thought indeed,
 Have weight to guard, and cause a watch,
 To humble stations lead.

Yes, let your conduct every day,
 Evince that you rely
 On this as truth, that He can see,
 With an All-seeing Eye.

Then you the great advantages,
 Here, and hereafter too,
 May reap, from being in his sight,
 Quite faithful, just, and true.

Transactions temp'ral will be found,
 Most likely in degree
 To prosper when religion's found,
 Truth and humility.

O, lay up treasures that are pure,
 In Heav'n, the seat above—
 For Wisdom's children ever sure;
 One scene of peace and love.

O seek the Lord, you then will find,
 No lack of things below;
 They will be added with delight—
 A blessed overflow.

Therefore obey the Word of Truth,
 The law that is divine;
 Then in old age as well as youth,
 You will with beauty shine:

And be prepared in perfect love,
 To gain the Seat of joy—
 The Mansions of delight above,
 Where nothing can annoy.

THE END.